

Officials Appreciation Week Profile:

Grace Goble

Grace Goble is proof of that participating in one sport does not preclude you from officiating another.

“My path to officiating began with a lifelong love of sports,” she explained. “I played field hockey and basketball, then became a Health and Physical Education teacher, spending decades working with children in the Toms River schools.”

A tip from a colleague eventually was Grace’s entry point into officiating in 2011.

“A fellow teacher who coached pole vault suggested that I try officiating cross country and track and field,” she said. “At first I was nervous, because I had never competed in either sport. But I gave officiating a try, and absolutely loved it.”

Years later, Grace continues to work both sports, and field hockey as well.

“What I enjoy most is working with middle and high school athletes,” she said. “My teaching experience has helped me understand young people, make them feel comfortable, and bring organization and patience to each event. Officiating has been a rewarding way to continue supporting students while staying involved in the sports I love.”

Grace has officiated Sectional, Group and Meet of Champions events. She was selected Official of the Year by her Shore track chapter in 2019, and was recently honored as Cross Country Official of the Year by the New Jersey Scholastic Officials Association.

Getting to know NJSIAA sports official Grace Goble:

You have received several awards for your work as an official. How does it feel to be recognized for your service?

“It’s a wonderful feeling. I am grateful for the awards, but what means the most is knowing I’ve earned the respect of people I enjoy working alongside.”

What do you enjoy most about being an official?

“It’s rewarding to watch the athletes grow and improve from season to season. I’ve also made some wonderful friendships with fellow officials along the way.”



What's the best part about any given day of officiating?

"The best part is seeing athletes give their best effort and knowing I've helped make the competition fair for everyone. Even after years of officiating, their excitement and determination make each day special."

Do you have any memories from your first meet as an official?

"I will never forget my first invitational cross country meet. The weather was awful and I was completely unprepared for it. I spent eight hours drenched and miserable. It certainly taught me to always keep a bag packed with anything and everything I might need for a meet."

What's the biggest misconception about the job of being an official?

"I think some people assume officiating is a thankless job where you're only noticed when someone disagrees with a call. That can make it seem overwhelming. But cross country and track are such welcoming sports and I've received so much support from fellow officials, athletes, and spectators. That encouragement is a big part of why I love doing it."

What would you say to anyone thinking about becoming an official?

"I'd say give it a try! You don't have to know everything on your first day. Experienced officials are happy to help and you'll learn with every game or meet. It's a wonderful way to stay involved in sports, support young athletes, and meet some great people along the way."



Think you might be interested in becoming a high school sports official?
Check out this link to learn more: <https://www.njsiaa.org/officials/become-official>